



A Message

FROM THE DEAN

This issue of *Connections* celebrates outstanding achievements by our students, staff members and faculty, and should also demonstrate that in constantly striving to “raise the bar” they have never lost touch with the values that characterize the very best of Concordia. This year’s faculty and staff winners of the Dean’s Awards for research and scholarship, teaching and service exemplify a passionate commitment to learning in action, to teaching and scholarship that in themselves are lofty and noble forms of service to higher values, whether social or intellectual. For Concordia’s students, this kind of education frequently can and does lead to a feeling of gaining altitude. Later in this issue, you will read an outstanding student’s reflections on what “excellence” has meant to him as a result of his Concordia education.

There is something about the word “excellence” that can make people uncomfortable. This is because we sometimes perceive it, as Bill Readings did in *The University in Ruins*, as a hollow term, without reference to anything concrete, always shifting and ultimately unattainable, that has displaced richer and truer language. This is true enough, in a way: “excellence,” like “innovation” and “transformation,” is frequently used as a communicative shortcut or administrative shorthand, to the point of becoming meaningless *langue de bois* for “a whole lot of whatever we can measure.”

At Concordia, the term “excellence” can evoke a different kind of discomfort because we sometimes worry it may also signify the sleight-of-hand imposition of an elitist and restrictive

By Dr. David Graham

attitude having little to do with Concordia’s past or with its values. This unease is all the more acute when we talk about research excellence, or about wanting to admit more excellent students, since by doing so, we may run the risk of displacing or devaluing excellent teaching or of turning away deserving students whose GPA may be a bit suspect.

“Excellence” derives from a Latin word whose roots lie in the idea of gaining enough altitude or height to be able to rise above one’s surroundings. It is important to emphasize that this loftiness can as easily refer to ethical and intellectual distinction as to athletic, social, or indeed financial accomplishment. In other words, Readings is correct in suggesting that “excellence” in itself is not adequate to specify a university’s goal, because the kind of distinction we seek is what is all-important. Without a connection to values, in other words, the notion of excellence is hollow indeed. But, when twinned with a commitment to intellectual and personal growth through teaching, research and learning along with an engagement and involvement in the community, a commitment to excellence can be seen as a noble desire to become stronger and better citizens who can put what we have learned to good use in the world outside the University for the betterment of everyone. There is nothing hollow about that, and everything to celebrate!



PHOTOGRAPH BY

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When I first arrived at Concordia University to pursue my BA in Communication Studies, I asked myself: how can I study and still “have fun”? How can I use my time at the University to make a difference? The answer was simple: get involved in every single extra-curricular activity available in the community.

Concordia University has played an important role in my life over the past three years; not only did I enhance my knowledge through the many courses I have taken, but I also had an opportunity to expand my horizons through the many associations and organizations I have been involved in, the student projects I have participated



ELLENCE

meaningful letters

By Gabriel Bran Lopez

in and my extensive travels for community development. It was through these experiences that I discovered the true meaning of striving for excellence.

Excellence, to me, can be making someone smile; lending a hand unconditionally; bringing refreshing perspectives to other communities; fostering interpersonal relationships; or learning from different cultures. The time I spent with the Concordia Volunteer Abroad Program (CVAP) in Gulu, a war zone in northern Uganda, working on cultural, educational and artistic endeavours, definitely gave a new meaning to the way I perceive the world. I learned first-hand how we

can truly make a difference while in Uganda and I learned what the true meaning of excellence is to me: Involving oneself in community development in order to grow and to sensitize other individuals to become more socially conscious.

Today, as I look back on my experiences, I am humbled by the recognition I have been given on a local and provincial level for my achievements while at the University. Last year, I was elected president of Concordia's prestigious Garnet Key Society, and I had the privilege of organizing Youth Fusion Jeunesse, a one-day conference on creative youth empowerment for university students and 12- to 17-year-olds.





e x c e l l e n c e

I have also been fortunate to be the recipient of scholarships such as the Astral Media Scholarship and the Rogers Sportsnet Scholarship, have been honoured as an Arts and Science Scholar and was the co-recipient of the Concordia University Alumni Association (CUAA) Outstanding Student Award.

All I can say is thank you! While all of these awards have opened many doors for me, and have provided me with an opportunity to meet a variety of interesting individuals, they have also enabled me to open doors that will enrich my life through further opportunities to make a difference. I am looking forward to spending three months in Senegal sensitizing the community in Dakar about human rights, health and education through a community radio station next year.

I want to urge and encourage students to get involved, to make a difference here and abroad, and to continuously strive for excellence. Excellence is only 10 letters, but it entails much more than meets the eye:

Educate yourself
Xpand your horizons
Commit to your projects
Engage yourself in your community
Laugh out loud
Lend a hand
Entertain yourself with hobbies
Nurture friendships and relationships
Cooperate with others
Enrich your life with new experiences

You have the potential, so inform yourself about what you can do and see what Concordia can bring to your life.

Placing A.M. Klein on the Landscape: REVIEWING A MONTREAL CONFERENCE AND ITS LITERARY ACCOMPLISHMENT

By Norman Ravvin

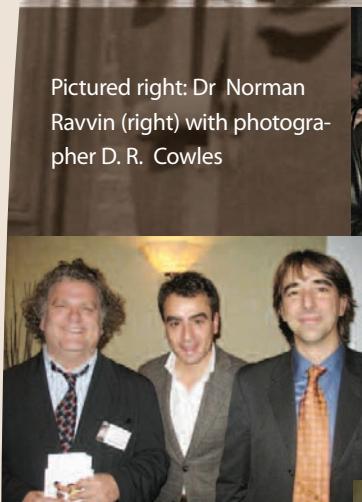
A. M. Klein is a poet making a comeback. His influence on younger Jewish writers such as Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler and Miriam Waddington was indisputable. And he was part of the new modernist developments around figures like F.R. Scott and Louis Dudek in Montreal. His poetry collection *The Rocking Chair* won the 1948 Governor General's Award, and his 1951 novel *The Second Scroll* is arguably among the earliest and most interesting literary responses to postwar Holocaust culture. Scholars have remained attentive, but it's arguable, too, that recent generations of readers of Canadian literature have thought little of Klein's work and influence. The "Poet as Landscape: A Portrait of A.M. Klein Today" conference, which was organized by the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies and held from October 18 - 20, 2007 at Concordia University, confirmed that Klein's work and life are reasserting themselves in the imagination of writers and the average Canadian reader. With talks given by Montrealers, as well as speakers from across the country, the conference considered Klein's modernist tendencies, his Jewish affiliations, his influence on figures like Richler, and the scope of his relevance for coming generations.

The latter concern was addressed most directly by a literary night with poets David McGimpsey, Carmine Starnino, David Solway and Robyn Sarah and translator Marie Frankland reading their own work alongside that of A.M. Klein. The evening, too, was a rare case of true collaboration between scholars, poets and writers' advocates, constituencies that are not always in open dialogue.

This three-day conference, which I co-organized with Sherry Simon and Jason Camlot, was a real success, with an opening night crowd of over 150, and moving words by A.M. Klein's sons, Colman and Sandor Klein. Concordia University co-sponsors included the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Département d'Études françaises and the Department of English. Information on the conference and other events can be viewed on the Institute's website: www.concordia.ca/jchair.



Pictured right: Dr Norman Ravvin (right) with photographer D. R. Cowles



Pictured left: Poets David McGimpsey, Carmine Starnino and Jason Camlot

Pictured right: Sandor Klein, Robyn Sarah and Marie Frankland



Dean's Circle Reception



More than 50 donors, comprising of alumni, friends, faculty and staff attended the Dean's Circle Reception on November 8, 2007, which was held to recognize and thank donors for their generous support during the 2006-2007 Annual Fund Campaign.



*Congratulations to the 2006/07
Arts and Science Scholars*

Pictured above, left:
Scholars from the
Department of Sociology
and Anthropology;
centre: Scholars from
the Department of
Political Science;
right: Scholars from the
Department of Economics.

Concordia University's Faculty of Arts and Science hosted a reception in the newly renovated Hive on Wednesday, October 31, 2007, to honour the 2006/07 Arts and Science Scholars.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners!

2007 Dean's Awards

FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT BY FACULTY AND STAFF



Back row, left to right: Dr. Fred Szabo, Mathematics and Statistics; Ms. Donna Whittaker, History; Dr. Harald Proppe, Mathematics and Statistics; Mr. Perry Calce, School of Community and Public Affairs; Dr. Pablo Gilabert, Philosophy; Dr. Andrew Ryder, Psychology; Dr. Robert Bernard, Education; Dr. Andrea Falcon, Philosophy; Dr. Linda Kay, Journalism; and Dr. David Graham, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science. Front row, left to right: Dr. Judith Herz, English; Ms. Sheelah O'Neill, Communication Studies; Dr. Diane Poulin-Dubois, Psychology; Dr. Walcir Cardoso, Education; and Dr. Philippe Caignon, Études françaises.

The Office of the Dean hosted a ceremony for the recipients of the **2006-2007 Dean's Awards for Outstanding Achievement by Faculty and Staff** on Wednesday, September 25, 2007. The 14 outstanding individuals (listed below) were honoured for their lasting contribution to the University, the Faculty, their colleagues and our students.

Exceptional Service to the Faculty

Mr. Perry Calce, School of Community and Public Affairs
Ms. Sheelah O'Neill, Communication Studies
Ms. Donna Whittaker, History

Distinguished Scholarship

Dr. Robert Bernard, Education
Dr. Diane Poulin-Dubois, Psychology

Outstanding Academic Service

Dr. Judith Herz, English
Dr. Harald Proppe, Mathematics and Statistics

New Scholar

Dr. Andrea Falcon, Philosophy
Dr. Pablo Gilabert, Philosophy
Dr. Andrew Ryder, Psychology

Teaching Excellence

Dr. Philippe Caignon, Études françaises
Dr. Walcir Cardoso, Education
Dr. Linda Kay, Journalism
Dr. Fred Szabo, Mathematics and Statistics

Snapshots

Congratulations to **Mark Russell**, Assistant Professor, Liberal Arts College, on his recently published book: *Between Tradition and Modernity: Aby Warburg and the Public Purposes of Art in Hamburg, 1896-1918* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

Congratulations to **Dr. Raymond Le Van Mao** and **Dr. John Capobianco**, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, who were each awarded grants to conduct research in their respective fields. Dr. Le Van Mao received a grant from the Quebec Minister of Industry in Economic Development, Innovation and Export for research on the conversion of biomass to ethyl levulinate. This compound is used as an additive to gasoline to improve the working properties of gasoline and diesel. Dr. Capobianco received a grant from "Authentics" in Dallas, Texas. His research program centres on the synthesis and characterization of lanthanide-doped nanoparticles. For this grant, up-converting nanoparticles will be used for the purpose of assessing authenticity of various materials, including in the detection of counterfeiting.

Dr. Christopher Wilds, CRC Chair (Tier II) in Biological Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, is the recipient of an award from the Ichikizaki Fund for Young Chemists. This award targets chemists early in their career who show unique achievements in research and provides them with financial assistance to participate in international conferences or symposia. Dr. Wilds was one of six researchers from across Canada to receive this award.

On August 30, 2007, the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry hosted a mini symposium to hear presentations from the NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awardees. The Department was fortunate to host eight young scientists this summer to conduct research in diverse fields ranging from organometallic chemistry to molecular biology.



Pictured from left to right: Alex Lawandi, Sebastian Murphy, Steven Horvath, Mara Inniss, Renee Kennedy and Shawn Karls.

Concordia University has been awarded a new Tier II Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Political Sociology of Global Futures, for **Satoshi Ikeda**, in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Professor Ikeda will examine socially and ecologically sustainable alternatives to the current global economy and politics dominated by the USA and global corporations. This research will contribute to our understanding of the problems with current globalization, and how we could work toward socially and ecologically sustainable futures.

John-Christopher Boyer, BSc and PhD degrees in Chemistry, has won the Prix d'Excellence de l'Académie des Grands Montréalais for the best doctoral thesis of the year in the natural sciences and engineering category. During the course of his graduate studies at Concordia under the supervision of Dr. John Capobianco, Dr. Boyer received numerous awards, including the Concordia University Armand C. Archambault Graduate Fellowship, the Concordia University J. W. O'Brien Graduate Fellowship and the Concordia University Garnet Strong Graduate Fellowship, as well as both NSERC and FQRNT postgraduate fellowships. More recently, he received both NSERC and FQRNT postdoctoral fellowships. Dr. Boyer currently works in the laboratory of Dr. Frank van Veggel in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Victoria, where he is continuing his research on nanocrystals by studying the site-specific deposition of nanocrystals in photonic crystals.

Kinia Adamczyk, a journalism and communication studies major, and **Gabriel Bran Lopez**, a communication studies major, were awarded Forces AVENIR awards in the category of Personality Awards - Undergraduates. These prestigious awards honour students and student-initiated projects for their outstanding work in community service and for raising social consciousness.

Dr. Christine DeWolf, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, recently received the Petro-Canada Young Innovator prize. The title of her winning proposal was "The Role of Surface Ozone Reactions in Environmental Processing of Atmospheric Aerosols and Lung Surfactant." Dr. DeWolf recently developed a novel approach using surface chemistry to quantify the effects of harmful ozone pollution on lung functioning, and will use the \$10,000 prize to further this research.



Connections is published four times a year by Concordia University's Faculty of Arts and Science. Its mandate is to provide current information on the many activities of the Faculty. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Faculty or the University.

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